Health (Tobacco, Nicotine etc. and Care) (Scotland) Bill

South Lanarkshire Council

Nicotine Vapour Products (NVP) and Smoking in Hospital Grounds

1. Do you support the Bill’s provisions in relation to NVPs?

Yes. The Bill proposes a range of restrictions, which South Lanarkshire Council supports: restricting the sale of NVPs, a minimum purchase age of 18, prohibiting the sale of NVPs via vending machines, the requirement of NVP retailers to register on the Tobacco Retailer Register and so on.

2. Do you support the proposal to ban smoking in hospital grounds?

Yes. South Lanarkshire Council particularly supports the Bill’s proposal to make it an offence to smoke in hospital grounds. This will bring about a clear and visible message to patients, visitors and staff and should ultimately lead to increased numbers of people giving up smoking. The Bill does offer some flexibility in terms of the extent of the ban (eg: distance from hospital buildings to perimeter, some areas of land excluded, some hospitals being exempt) though it is also questionable how easy it will be to enforce the ban. South Lanarkshire Council along with our partners within the NHS supports many vulnerable people who choose to smoke. An obvious example and where smoking prevalence rates are high is in supporting people with mental health issues, many of whom may choose to smoke to relieve stress. We do therefore welcome the flexibility according to local circumstances of the needs of particular clients/patients.

3. Is there anything you would add/remove/change in the Bill with regard to NVPs or smoking in hospital grounds?

One of South Lanarkshire Council’s key objectives is to protect vulnerable children, young people and adults. With this in mind and the Council’s commitment to supporting people to lead healthier lives, we feel there is scope to consider placing restrictions on the use of NVPs in enclosed public spaces too, in better ensuring that children, young people and adults are protected from the potential harm NVPs can cause such as with tobacco products. As a Health and Social Care Partnership, we would also question whether all public grounds should be covered by the ban, aspiring to a smoke free Scotland by 2034.

In relation to hospital grounds, signage will play an important part. We feel signs should be visible throughout the hospital grounds and not just at the entrance of the perimeter and again at the doors of the hospital.

We would also support further awareness raising of the dangers of smoking within the field of mental health. A paradox exists in that if long-stay mental health wards were to be exempted in some way allowing people to smoke in protected areas, these clients could be disadvantaged when the visible
message to all other patients and visitors to the hospital is one of health promotion.

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